

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 8, 13, 20, 25 and 26 as follows: (a clean copy of the amended claims is attached hereto)

1. (Amended) A process for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising the steps of:

the buyer submitting a service request to a broker for auctioning;
the buyer specifying at the start of the auction the number N of best bids to be considered from the auction, where N is a number less than number of all bids, and predetermined by the buyer based on tradeoff between price competition among bidders (at a smaller N value) and number of bidders available for buyer selection of a bidder based on factors other than price (at a larger N value);

the broker making the number N available to bidders;
the broker notifying the buyer of the identities of the N lowest bids; and
the buyer selecting a bidder from one of the N lowest bids or choosing not to execute the job.

8. (Amended) A process for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising the steps of:

the buyer submitting a service request to a broker for auctioning;
the broker making available to potential bidders a buyer rating, wherein said rating includes information on the buyer's follow-through of bids in prior auctions; and
the potential bidders considering the rating in deciding on [bidding] whether to bid on the service request, wherein the higher the rating, the more willing the potential bidders would want to bid, and the lower the rating, the less willing the potential bidders would want to bid.

13. (Amended) A system for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising:
means for the buyer to submit a service request to a broker for auctioning;
means for the buyer to specify at the start of the auction the number N of best bids to be

considered from the auction, where N is a number less than number of all bids, and predetermined by the buyer based on tradeoff between price competition among bidders (at a smaller N value) and number of bidders available for buyer selection of a bidder based on factors other than price (at a larger N value);

means for the broker to make N available to bidders; and

means for the buyer to select a bidder from one of the N best bids.

20. (Amended) A broker system for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising:

means for receiving from the buyer a service request for auctioning;

means for making available to potential bidders a buyer rating, wherein said rating includes information on the buyer's follow-through of bids in prior auctions, wherein the potential bidders consider the rating in deciding on [bidding] whether to bid on the service request, wherein the higher the rating, the more willing the potential bidders would want to bid, and the lower the rating, the less willing the potential bidders would want to bid; and

means for receiving bids from the bidders.

25. (Amended) A network system for auctioning services, comprising:

one or more nodes for buyers to access the network;

one or more nodes for bidders to access the network; and

a broker system for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising:

means for the buyer to submit a service request to a broker for auctioning;

means for the buyer to specify at the start of the auction the number N of best bids to be considered from the auction, where N is a number less than number of all bids, and predetermined by the buyer based on tradeoff between price competition among bidders (at a smaller N value) and number of bidders available for buyer selection of a bidder based on factors other than price (at a larger N value);

means for the broker to make N available to bidders; and

means for the buyer to select a bidder from one of the N best bids.

26. (Amended) A network system for auctioning services, comprising:

one or more nodes for buyers to access the network;

one or more nodes for bidders to access the network; and

a broker system for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising:

means for receiving from the buyer a service request for auctioning;

means for making available to potential bidders a buyer rating, wherein said rating includes information on the buyer's follow-through of bids in prior auctions, wherein the potential bidders consider the rating in deciding on [bidding] whether to bid on the service request, wherein the higher the rating, the more willing the potential bidders would want to bid, and the lower the rating, the less willing the potential bidders would want to bid; and

means for receiving bids from the bidders.



Clean Copy of Amended Claims

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the buyer submitting a service request to a broker for auctioning;

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the broker making the number N available to bidders;

the broker notifying the buyer of the identities of the N lowest bids; and

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the broker making available to potential bidders a buyer rating, wherein said rating includes information on the buyer's follow-through of bids in prior auctions; and

the potential bidders considering the rating in deciding on whether to bid on the service request, wherein the higher the rating, the more willing the potential bidders would want to bid, and the lower the rating, the less willing the potential bidders would want to bid.

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means for the broker to make N available to bidders; and

means for the buyer to select a bidder from one of the N best bids.

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means for receiving from the buyer a service request for auctioning;

means for making available to potential bidders a buyer rating, wherein said rating includes information on the buyer's follow-through of bids in prior auctions, wherein the potential bidders consider the rating in deciding on whether to bid on the service request, wherein the higher the rating, the more willing the potential bidders would want to bid, and the lower the rating, the less willing the potential bidders would want to bid; and

means for receiving bids from the bidders.

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one or more nodes for buyers to access the network;

one or more nodes for bidders to access the network; and

a broker system for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising:

means for the buyer to submit a service request to a broker for auctioning;

means for the buyer to specify at the start of the auction the number N of best bids to be considered from the auction, where N is a number less than number of all bids, and predetermined by the buyer based on tradeoff between price competition among bidders (at a smaller N value) and number of bidders available for buyer selection of a bidder based on factors other than price (at a larger N value);

means for the broker to make N available to bidders; and

means for the buyer to select a bidder from one of the N best bids.

26. (Amended) A network system for auctioning services, comprising:

one or more nodes for buyers to access the network;

one or more nodes for bidders to access the network; and

a broker system for auctioning services requested by a buyer, comprising:

means for receiving from the buyer a service request for auctioning;

means for making available to potential bidders a buyer rating, wherein said rating includes information on the buyer's follow-through of bids in prior auctions, wherein the potential bidders consider the rating in deciding on whether to bid on the service request,

wherein the higher the rating, the more willing the potential bidders would want to bid, and the lower the rating, the less willing the potential bidders would want to bid; and means for receiving bids from the bidders.